

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 IGA-02 EB-07 AID-05
MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
OMB-01 /087 W
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R 042143Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5866
INFO USUN 567
AMCONSUL BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GUATEMALA 2778

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR GT US OVIP (YOUNG, ANDREW), SHUM
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S MEETING WITH GUATEMALAN FONMIN

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S TALK WITH GUATEMALAN FONMIN COVERED HUMAN RIGHTS AND MILITARY AID, BELIZE DISPUTE, AND ECLA CONFERENCE. FOREIGN MINISTER TOOK STANDARD POSITIONS ON ALL TOPICS, BUT EXPRESSED KEEN INTEREST IN VISIT BY PRESIDENT CARTER TO CENTRAL AMERICA. END SUMMARY

2. AMBASSADOR YOUNG, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR BOSTER AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR, CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER ADOLFO MOLINA FOR AN HOUR'S CONVERSATION MAY 3. FONMIN BEGAN BY CONGRATULATING AMBASSADOR ON HIS "VERY EXCELLENT SPEECH" TO ECLA CONFERENCE, NOTING ITS "GREAT MORAL CONTENT." AMBASSADOR SAID IT WAS ATTEMPT TO EXPRESS HOPES CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS THAT HAVE NOT YET BECOME POLICIES, BUT THAT ARE MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION. AMBASSADOR SAID HE SHOULD THANK MOLINA FOR CAREFUL WAY FONMIN HAS HANDLED US-GUATEMALAN RELATIONS DESPITE SOME DISAGREEMENTS.

3. MOLINA SAID THERE HAD NOT REALLY BEEN ANY
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DISAGREEMENTS. HE ASSUMED AMBASSADOR HAD HUMAN RIGHTS IN MIND. HE HAD CALLED ON SECRETARY VANCE MARCH 14 AND TOLD HIM GOG AGREES WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. WE ARE FIRST OF ALL HUMAN BEINGS AND THEREFORE MUST RESPECT BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS. BUT THERE WERE INACCURACIES IN DEPARTMENT'S REPORT TO CONGRESS ON GUATEMALA. FOR

EXAMPLE, REPORT SAID VIOLENCE IN GUATEMALA WAS DUE TO PERSONAL FEUDS. IN FACT IT IS DUE TO DIFFERENCES IN IDEOLOGY. COMMUNIST PARTY VERY ACTIVE, EVEN THOUGH ILLEGAL, AND GUERRILLAS HAVE EXISTED FOR OVER 15 YEARS. REPORT REFERS TO DESAPARECIDOS, PEOPLE WHO DISAPPEAR, AS YOU AMBASSADOR YOUNG DID IN YOUR SPEECH. FACT IS THAT IN ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN GUERRILLAS AND ANTI-COMMUNIST FORCES PEOPLE ARE KILLED OR DISAPPEAR ON BOTH SIDES. NOT LONG AGO A GUATEMALAN AIR FORCE HELICOPTER WAS SHOT DOWN BY GUERRILLAS AND GOG HAS INFORMATION THEY WERE TRAINED IN CUBA. IT IS NOT THE CASE THAT PEOPLE DISAPPEAR IN PEACEFUL, NORMAL TIMES; THESE HAVE NOT BEEN PEACEFUL TIMES FOR GUATEMALA. ANOTHER EXAMPLE IS REPORT'S QUOTING OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, WHICH FOR GOG IS NOT A VERY SERIOUS ORGANIZATION. IT PICKS UP HEARSAY THAT CANNOT BE CONFIRMED, AND GIVES GOG NO CHANCE TO ANSWER ITS CHARGES.

4. AMBASSADOR ASKED WHETHER GUATEMALA HAD HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH CHURCH PEOPLE ADVOCATING REVOLUTION. MOLINA SAID YES, BUT ONLY A FEW INDIVIDUALS, AND NO ONE PROMINENT SUCH AS DOM HELDER CAMARA IN BRAZIL. THERE IS A POPULIST PRIEST, PADRE CHEMITA, WHO RAN FOR MAYOR FOUR YEARS AGO. THERE WAS ALSO AN AMERICAN NUN WHO BECAME A REVOLUTIONIST AND TRAVELLED WITH A GUERRILLA LEADER. AMBASSADOR ASKED IF THIS WAS NUN WHO MARRIED THOMAS MELVILLE, AND MOLINA SAID IT WAS. BUT THESE WERE ISOLATED CASES. RECENTLY THE CHURCH ISSUED A PASTORAL LETTER CRITICAL OF GOG. (SEE 76 GUATEMALA A-99.) MOLINA UNDERSTANDS THE BISHOPS WERE DIVIDED OVER THE TEXT. BUT THE CHURCH IS NOT A MAJOR
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PROBLEM HERE AS IT IS IN EL SALVADOR.

5. OUR BASIC OBJECTION TO DEPARTMENT'S REPORT, MOLINA CONTINUED, IS THAT NO FOREIGN GOVERNMENT, NO MATTER HOW WELL INTENTIONED, SHOULD SIT IN JUDGMENT ON GUATEMALA. NON-INTERVENTION, HAD BEEN ONE OF SACRED PRINCIPLES OF THE HEMISPHERE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. WHEN GOG RECEIVED US NOTE REGARDING THE REPORT, IT HAD THREE OPTIONS: DENY THE CHARGES, WHICH WOULD TACITLY ADMIT US RIGHT TO SIT IN JUDGMENT; REMAIN SILENT, WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS ACCEPTANCE OF BOTH THE RIGHT AND THE CHARGES; OR TO REJECT ANY FURTHER ASSISTANCE CONDITIONED ON SUCH REPORTS. TO BE JUDGED BY US IS ONE THING, BUT WHAT IF CUBA WERE TO TRY TO SIT IN JUDGMENT ON GUATEMALA? GOG BELIEVES INTER-AMERICAN TRIBUNALS, WHERE ACCUSED COUNTRY CAN DEFEND ITSELF, WOULD BE BETTER WAY TO APPROACH PROBLEM.

6. AMBASSADOR YOUNG NOTED THAT OF COURSE CONGRESSIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR REPORTS ANTEDATED CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

PRESIDENT CARTER HAS SOUGHT TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE. EVEN IN CASES WHICH GIVE US REAL DIFFICULTY, SUCH AS SOUTH KOREA, PRESIDENT'S WORK ON BEHALF OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAS BEEN PRIVATE, NOT PUBLIC. AMBASSADOR YOUNG SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO REPORT FONMIN'S VIEWS TO THE PRESIDENT. WE'RE TRYING TO GET HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE MOVED BACK FROM CONGRESS TO THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH SO THAT WE COULD HAVE MORE FREEDOM TO DIFFERENTIATE. WHEN HE WAS IN CONGRESS, HE HAD HELPED PASS THE LEGISLATION CALLING FOR REPORTS, BECAUSE HE FELT THAT IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS GREECE AND CHILE OUR OWN GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN IN PART RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. NOW THAT WE HAVE A NEW EXECUTIVE, CONGRESS CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT IT WILL BE TRUSTWORTHY IN PURSUING HUMAN RIGHTS. BUT HE HAD NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO CONVINCE HIS FORMER COLLEAGUES IN CONGRESS.

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R 042143Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5867
INFO USUN 568
AMCONSUL BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GUATEMALA 2778

7. AMBASSADOR BOSTER POINTED OUT THAT WHEN GOG REJECTED FURTHER MILITARY AID, IT HAD ISSUED A PUBLIC STATEMENT PUTTING ITS ACTION IN PERSPECTIVE AND SAYING IT DID NOT REPRESENT ANY COOLING OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. MOLINA AGREED, NOTING THAT US AND GUATEMALA ARE OLD FRIENDS - BUT GUATEMALA IS NOT WILLING TO BE JUDGED, AND NOT WILLING TO RECEIVE AID THAT IS LINKED TO QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS - FROM ANY GOVERNMENT, NOT JUST US. BUT AMBASSADOR BOSTER SAID, THIS WILL NOT DAMAGE OUR RELATIONS. GUATEMALA HAS MANY REASONS TO BE THANKFUL TO US, NOTABLY ASSISTANCE RENDERED AFTER EARTHQUAKE. MOLINA LISTED AID GIVEN, NOTING THAT MUCH OF IT HAD BEEN MILITARY IN NATURE (HELICOPTERS, ARMY

HOSPITAL, ARMY ENGINEERS). AMBASSADOR YOUNG SAID YOU CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON US FOR DISASTER RELIEF; WE WILL NEVER HESITATE OR COUNT THE COST.

8. MOLINA ASKED HOW AMBASSADOR YOUNG SAW ECLA MEETING GOING. AMBASSADOR SAID WHAT HE HAD SEEN SO FAR WAS VERY ENCOURAGING. MOLINA SAID GOG WAS CONCERNED ABOUT OUTCOME OF CONFERENCE. COLOMBIA IS CIRCULATING A PROPOSED FINAL DECLARATION WHICH MANY DELEGATES FEEL CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTAINS NO SIGNIFICANT ADVANCES, AND THEREFORE THAT WE WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITH NO FINAL DECLARATION AT ALL. AMBASSADOR YOUNG SAID US FOR ITS PART HAD TWO PROBLEMS. FIRST, NEW ADMINISTRATION WAS ONLY 100 DAYS OLD. SECOND, WE ARE TRYING TO WORK OUT OUR APPROACH TO THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE JOINTLY WITH WESTERN EUROPE AND JAPAN, BUT THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT WILL NOT BE HELD UNTIL NEXT WEEK. IF ECLA MEETING HAD BEEN HELD A LITTLE LATER, WE MIGHT HAVE HAD BETTER ANSWERS TO THE HARD QUESTIONS YOU HAVE. BUT PRESIDENT CARTER'S ACTION ON SHOE TARIFFS IS AN EXAMPLE OF HIS COMMITMENT TO FREER TRADE AND TO HELPING THE LDCS. PRESIDENT HAS ASKED CONGRESS FOR LARGEST FOREIGN AID APPROPRIATION EVER, MOSTLY TO GO THROUGH THE IFI'S. JUST AS YOU IN LATIN AMERICA DISTRUST SLOGANS, WE DISTRUST ASPECTS OF THE COMMON FUND, NIEO, ETC. BUT IN THE PAST US WAS RELUCTANT ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS ON SOME OF THESE DIFFICULT ISSUES; NOW YOU WILL SEE US DOING SO.

9. MOLINA SAID HE HAD HAD SOME SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT US POSITIONS, BUT HE NOW UNDERSTOOD THE SITUATION BETTER. AMBASSADOR YOUNG SAID HE COULD ASSURE THE MINISTER THAT LATIN AMERICA WOULD NOT BE IGNORED OR TAKEN FOR GRANTED. MOLINA STRESSED THE BENEFIT TO US-CENTRAL AMERICAN RELATIONS IF PRESIDENT CARTER WERE TO COME ON A VISIT, AND AMBASSDOR YOUNG NOTED THAT MRS. CARTER WOULD BE VISITING THE AREA SOON.

10. MOLINA THEN TURNED TO WHAT HE CALLED "OUR MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM, "THE BELIZE DISPUTE, WHICH WILL COME UP AGAIN IN THE UNGA THIS FALL. HE REVIEWED HISTORY OF PROBLEM, NOTING THAT DISPUTE HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN ONLY WITH UK BUT NOW THAT BELIZE POPULATION HAD GROWN AND WANTED INDIEPENDENCE IT HAD BECOME A THREE-SIDED PROBLEM. GUATEMALA VERY AWARE BELIZE POPULATION IS DIFFERENT AND HAS DIFFERENT INTERESTS FROM GUATEMALA'S. PROBLEM IS GUATEMALAN CONSTITUTION SAYS BELIZE IS PART OF GUATEMALA
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AND ARMY FEELS OBLIGED TO OBEY CONSTITUTION.
WHAT IS NEEDED, MOLINA SAID, IS TO FIND A FACE-SAVING
DEVICE FOR ALL THREE PARTIES. GUATEMALA IS TRYING TO
REACH A COMPROMISE BUT THERE MUST BE SACRIFICES ON BOTH
SIDES. IF UK AND BELIZE CONTINUE TO BE INFLEXIBLE, WE
MAY HAVE A CONFRONTATION. THAT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE;
WE WANT TO LIVE IN PEACE AND COOPERATION WITH BELIZE.
AMBASSADOR YOUNG SAID BRITISH PERMREP RICHARD HAD ASKED
TO SEE HIM BEFORE HE LEFT FOR GUATEMALA TO BRIEF HIM
ON THE DISPUTE, BUT THEY HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET
TOGETHER. THEY WOULD DO SO WHEN AMBASSADOR YOUNG GOT
BACK.

11. MOLINA SAID GOG COULD NOT GO TO ITS PEOPLE WITH
EMPTY HANDS AND REPORT THAT BELIZE WOULD BECOME
INDEPENDENT; THEY WOULD BE HUNG FROM LAMPPOSTS, OR, MORE
SERIOUSLY, ARMY WOULD PUSH US TO A CONFRONTATION.
GUATEMALA COULD NOT DEFEAT THE BRITISH ARMY. THEREFORE
IT WANTED TO WIN AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE. MOLINA SAID
AT ONE TIME WE HAD AMERICAN MEDIATION, AND PERHAPS WE
COULD TRY THAT AGAIN. AMBASSADOR BOSTER NOTED THAT IT
HAD NOT WORKED THE LAST TIME. MOLINA SAID PERHAPS IT
WOULD THE NEXT.
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Message Attributes

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